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Voices of Diversity

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The Rez Sisters Worksheet

1. Reflect on the importance of the character (spirit?) not seen by all the characters but seen by only one or a few of the characters and discuss that character’s importance to the dramatic action and the development of the plot.

Nanabush is incredibly important for the development of the plot and the dramatic action that ensues throughout the play. Nanabush’s character is what is known as the “Trickster”. A trickster is typically a character that appears to be very intelligent and can take the shape of various things to play tricks on other characters or disobey normal rules and conventions. In The Rez Sisters, Nanabush appears as a seagull, a nighthawk, and as the bingo master. Nanabush often appears in the scenes before one of the characters share an important detail or recall a situation that happened beforehand. It appears that only Marie and Zhaboonigan can communicate with Nanabush. This is crucial to the plot because it helps to reveals to the audience about Zhaboonigan’s rape and Marie’s marital issues. The trickster helps to act as an emotional outlet and escape for the characters to recall the dramatic events and problems they are going through which helps to develop the plot.

2. Compare the aspirations and socio-economic level of the characters in this play with those in Wedding Band, Queen's Garden, and Real Women.

In all three plays, all of the minorities seem to come from a low economic background and come across socioeconomic issues. In Wedding Band, the women wish to experience romance as well as earn more money to leave and form a better life for themselves. In Queen’s Garden, Brenda also wishes to escape where she grew up and to create a better life for herself away from the Westside. In Real Women Have Curves, the older women want to open a boutique and better themselves while Ana wants to go to college and become a writer to create a better life for herself. It appears that in all of the plays, at least one character wishes to escape their current financial situation to create a better life for themselves.

3. Compare the role of women and the depiction of men in this play with that in Real Women Have Curves

In both plays, it seems that the women are forced or feel compelled to put up with men who do not treat them with respect. In Real Women Have Curves, the men are depicted as verbally abusive and the women are expected to stay at home and be the care takers. Likewise in The Rez Sisters, many of the women in the play are abused by men, like Zhaboonigan who was raped by men. They are also expected to stay home and clean the house/ watch the children. Both plays do not exhibit many male characters, however the women talk about them in a distasteful manner and it is obvious that they are not respectful to the women.